

09 825944

WO00/19844

PCT/GB99/03285

16

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A tray unloader for rod-like articles of the tobacco industry includes a horizontally-movable, slidable carriage supporting an independently-driven tray inverting carrier arranged to pick up an upright full tray from a receiving position and invert it during movement to an unloading position. In the unloading position articles are received directly over opposed horizontal bands having a delivery channel between confronting ends and defining the initial level at which articles are received over most of the width of the tray. Downstream of the channel is a conveyor which operates at a relatively high rate during a first phase of unloading for each tray and at a reduced rate during a second phase, so as to allow controlled emptying of the tray and establishment of the residual level of articles in the channel after completion of unloading of each tray.

TO 500 44 825944